

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

The
Welles

And ful of grene leues set,
That sonne mighte noon descende,
Lest it the tendre grasses shende.
Ther mighte men does and roes ysee,
And of squirrels ful greet plentee,
From bough to bough alwey leping.
Conies ther were also playing,
That comen out of hir claperes
Of sondry colours and maneres,
And maden many a turneyng
Upon the fresshe gras springing.

IN places saw I Welles there,
In whiche ther no frogges were,
And fair in shadwe was every welle;
But I ne can the nombre telle
Of stremes smale, that by devys
Mirthe had don come through condys,
Of which the water, in renning,
Can make a noyse ful lyking.

BOUT the brinks of thise welles,
And by the stremes overal elles
Sprang up the gras, as thikke yset
And softe as any veluet,
On which men mighte his lemman leye,
As on a fetherbed, to pleye,
For therthe was ful softe and swete.
Through moisture of the welle wete
Sprang up the sote grene gras,
As fair, as thikke, as mister was.
But muche amended it the place,
That therthe was of swich a grace
That it of floures had plente,
That both in somer and winter be.

THER sprang the violete al newe,
And fresshe pervinke, riche of hewe,
And floures yelow, whyte, and rede;
Swich plentee grew ther never in mede.
ful gay was al the ground, and queynt,
And poudred, as men had it peynt,
With many a fresh and sondry flour,
That casten up ful good savour.

IWOL not longe holde you in fable
Of al this gardin delitable.
I moot my tonge stinten nede,
for I ne may, withouten drede,
Naught tellen you the beautee al,
Ne half the bountee therewithal.

WENTE on right honde and on left
About the place; it was not left,
Til I hadde al the yerde in been,
In the estres that men mighte seen.
And thus whyle I wente in my pley,
The God of Love me folowed ay,
Right as an hunter can abyde
The beste, til he seeth his tyde
To shete, at good mes, to the dere,
Whan that him nedeth go no nere.

AND so befel, I rested me
Besyde a welle, under a tree,
Whiche tree in fraunce men calle a pyn.
But, sith the tyme of kyng Pepyn,
Ne grew ther tree in mannes sighte
So fair, ne so wel woxe in highte;
In al that yerde so high was noon.

And springing in a marble stoon
Had nature set, the sothe to telle,
Under that pyn tree a welle.
And on the border, al withoute,
Was writen, in the stone aboute,
Lettres smale, that seyden thus:
Here starf the faire Narcissus.

NARCISUS was a bachelere,
That Love had caught in his
daungere,
And in his net gan him so streyne,
And dide him so to wepe and pleyne,
That nede him muste his lyf forgo.

for a fair lady, hight Echo,
him loved over any creature,
And gan for him swich peyne endure,
That on a tyme she him tolde,
That, if he hir loven nolde,
That hir behoved nedes dye,
Ther lay non other remedye.
But natheles, for his beautee,
So fiers and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunten hir asking,
for weping, ne for fair praying.
And whan she herde him werne hir so,
She hadde in herte so gret wo,
And took it in so gret dyspyt,
That she, withoute more respyt,
Was deed anon. But, er she deyde,
ful pitously to God she preyde,
That proude/herted Narcissus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Mighte on a day ben hampered so
for love, and been so hoot for wo,
That never he mighte joye atteyne;
Than shulde he fele in every weyne
What sorowe trewe lovers maken,
That been so vilaynly forsaken.
This prayer was but resonable,
Therfor God held it ferme and stable:
for Narcissus, shortly to telle,
By aventure com to that welle
To reste him in that shadowing
A day, whan he com fro hunting.
This Narcissus had suffred paynes
for renning alday in the playnes,
And was for thirst in greet distresse
Of hete, and of his werinesse
That hadde his breeth almost binomen.
Whan he was to that welle ycomen,
That shadwed was with braunches grene,
He thoughte of thilke water shene
To drinke and fresshe him wel withalle;
And down on knees he gan to falle,
And forth his heed and nekke out/straughte
To drinke of that welle a draughte.
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouth, his yen shene,
And he therof was al abasshed;
His owne shadowe had him bitrashed.
for wel wende he the forme see
Of a child of greet beautee.
Wel couthe Love him wreke tho
Of daunger and of pryde also,



That Narcissus somtyme him bere.
He quitte him wel his guerdon there;
for he so mused in the welle,
That, shortly al the sothe to telle,
He lovede his owne shadowe so,
That atte laste he starf for wo.
for whan he saugh that he his wille
Mighte in no maner wey fulfillen,
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comfort naught,
He loste his wit right in that place,
And deyde within a litel space.
And thus his warisoun he took
for the lady that he forsook.

ADYES, I preye ensample taketh,
Ye that ayeins your love mistaketh:
for if hir deeth be yow to wyte,
God can ful wel your whyle quyte.

WHAN that this lettre, of whiche
I telle,
Had taught me that it was the
welle
Of Narcissus in his beautee,
I gan anon withdrawe me,
Whan it fel in my remembraunce,
That him bitidde swich mischaunce.
But at the laste than thoughte I,
That scatheles, ful sikerly,

I mighte unto The Welle go.
Wherof shulde I abasshen so?
Unto the welle than wente I me,
And down I louted for to see
The clere water in the stoon,
And eek the gravel, which that shoon
Down in the botme, as silver fyn;
for of the welle, this is the fyn.
In world is noon so cleer of hewe.
The water is ever fresh and newe
That welmeth up with wawes bryghte
The mountance of two finger highte.
Abouten it is gras springing,
for moiste so thikke and wel lyking,
That it ne may in winter dye,
No more than may the see be drye.
DOWN at the botme set saw I
Two cristal stonys craftely
In thilke fresshe and faire welle.
But o thing soothly dar I telle,
That ye wol holde a greet mervayle
Whan it is told, withouten fayle,
for whan the sonne, cleer in sighte,
Cast in that welle his bemes bryghte,
And that the heet descended is,
Than taketh the cristal stoon, ywis,
Agayn the sonne an hundred hewes,
Blewe, yelow, & rede, that fresh and newe is.